ART:
MAHIRO SATOU

ORIGINAL STORY:
JIN (SHIZEN NO TEKI-P)

CHARACTER DESIGN:
SIDU,WANNYANPUU-

TAKANE!

IT'S STARTING TO SNOW!

WHOA!

IT SURE IS!

YOU THINK IT'LL STICK?

YEAH, MAYBE!

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE!

WELL, I HOPE NOT. IT'S TOO COLD...

LOOK AT THAT GOOFY SMILE ON HIS FACE...

KAGEROU DAZE 4

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THIS YEAR, HARUKA'S TAKEN IT UPON HIMSELF TO PLAN A HOLIDAY PARTY.

IT'S BEEN SEVERAL MONTHS SINCE THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL... IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS, IN FACT.

SU (SLIP)

IT ALSO...

GARA (SLIDE)

I MADE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO SAVE UP AND CHOOSE THE PERFECT GIFT!

IF HE DOESN'T REACT AT ALL, I SWEAR I'LL PUNCH HIM!

HEE HEE HEE.

NIKO CGRIND

NIKO

HEE HEE!

I KEPT THIS A TOTAL SECRET.

I BET HARUKA'S GONNA LOVE THIS.

...JUST HAPPENS TO BE HARUKA'S BIRTHDAY.

...HARUKA HAD ANOTHER ONE OF HIS ATTACKS.

BUT ON THE BIG DAY...

I ONLY JUST GOT HERE TOO.

BA (CRUSH)

SEN-SEI!!

HOW'S HARU-KA...!?

GACHA (CKCHAK)

ナイ!!

ヤツ!!

HARU-KA!!!

I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT APPARENTLY, IT'S NOTHING TOO SERIOUS.

HIS ROOM'S OVER THIS WAY.

.....

MOGU (MUNCH)

MOGU

MMNH?

...KOKO-NOSE-SAN'S ALREADY EATEN ENOUGH FOR FIVE PEOPLE.

HARUKA...

WHEW!

IN THE END, THEY KEPT HARUKA IN THE HOSPITAL FOR A WEEK.

SORRY, YOU GUYS.

MOGU (MUNCH)

もぐ

MOGU

もぐ

HAAAH ...

THAT STAY LASTED A WHILE LONGER; HE COULDN'T LEAVE HIS ROOM FOR A WHOLE MONTH.

AFTER WINTER BREAK, HE WAS HIS USUAL PEPPY SELF AT SCHOOL...

...BUT ANOTHER EPISODE SENT HIM BACK TO THE HOSPITAL AFTER A MONTH.

AFTER THE SCHOOL FESTI-VAL...

...HARUKA KIND OF GOT ADDICTED TO DEAD BULLET -1989-.

ONCE I GET OUT, I'M GONNA HAVE TO PRACTICE UP!

WELL, I MEAN, I CAN'T PLAY ANY VIDEO GAMES IN HERE.

WHY'RE YOU SIGHING LIKE THAT?

AFTER WE GOT DONE WITH CLEANUP ON THE NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL...

BA

BA (FWIP)

YOU CAN'T JUST SAY...

...'THE HERO OF THE DAY ALWAYS ARRIVES LATE, RIGHT?'

THAT MAKES NO SENSE!!

COME ON, SENSEI!

東元桜

AW, DON'T GET SO UPSET!

BESIDES, I'M TREATING YOU GUYS TO CHINESE TO MAKE UP FOR IT.

WELL, RUNNING IT BY OURSELVES WAS A HUGE PAIN!

RIGHT, HARUKA?

MOGU

MOGU

MMH!

YEAH, WELL...

REGARDLESS...

...THE FESTIVAL WAS STILL PRETTY FUN FOR YOU GUYS, WASN'T IT?

EW! DON'T BE GROSS, HARUKA!

AT LEAST SWALLOW BEFORE YOU START TALKING!

SORRYYYY...

MOGO

MOGO

WELL, WE HAD OUR SHARE OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES ALONG THE WAY, BUT—

OOH! HEY, THIS STEAMED BUN IS CRAZY GOOD!

OOH, RRRPH THINH THA' LOOPH RIUH GOOH TOO.

HOW MANY MUGS IS THAT ANYWAY!?

AND DON'T THINK I'M THROUGH WITH YOU YET, SENSEI! STOP DRINKING ALL THAT BEER!

GEEN

UUUGH...

I TOLD YOU—DON'T CALL ME BY THAT NAME EVER AGAIN!

THE WAY YOU MOWED DOWN ALL THOSE BAD GUYS, ENE...!

HAH HAH HAH!

YOU FINALLY WERE EXPOSED, HUH, TAKANE?

"HOLY NIGHTMARE," WAS IT?

BOY, THAT WAS REALLY SOMETHING THOUGH, HUH?

PIKU (TWITCH)

BOGU (WHUMP)

OW!!

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S ANYTHING BAD, SO DON'T GET SO WORKED UP ABOUT IT, ENE—

WELL... YEAH, BUT...

...WHAT DOES THAT MATTER?

OH, I DUNNO.

IT JUST SEEMED KINDA NEAT.

YEAH! YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIDE IT OR ANYTHING!

"ENE" IS FROM YOUR NAME, RIGHT? "E" FROM "ENOMOTO" AND THE "NE" FROM "TAKANE"?

BUT YOU KNOW, THAT HANDLE ...

MOGU MOGU (MUNCH)

HMM...

HEY, I WANNA COME UP WITH ONE TOO!

GEEZ...

GAMING HANDLES ARE THE KIND OF THING YOU MAKE UP ON THE FLY, OKAY? YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANALYZE THEM LIKE THAT...

LIKE, IT'S SORT OF COOL, HAVING ANOTHER NAME THAT ISN'T YOUR REAL ONE.

WHAT ABOUT THE "DANCING FLASH" THING? IS THAT RELATED TO YOU—?

WHOA! WAIT, WAIT! I'M SORRY! JUST PUT YOUR FIST DOWN!

YEAH, SURE, WHATEVER.

GREAT TO MEET YOU, KONOHA-KUN.

OOOOH!

I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT...! THINK I'LL START SPREADING THAT NAME AROUND!

I'M HARUKA KOKONOSE, SO...

...HOW ABOUT "KONOHA"?

ONCE I'M OUT, WE GOTTA PLAY TOGETHER, TAKANE!

—WHICH LEADS US TO TODAY.

I USED TO MAKE SUCH AN EFFORT TO HIDE MY GAMING HABIT FROM HARUKA...

...BUT NOW IT MAKES ME KIND OF HAPPY.

HARUKA ...

HOPE HE GETS BETTER SOON...

WE BOTH MOVED UP TO THE NEXT GRADE SOON AFTERWARD...

...BUT HARUKA'S ATTACKS DIDN'T SHOW MUCH SIGN OF ABATING.

SOON...

...IT WAS SUMMER VACATION.

MIN

MIIIN (BUZZZ)

MIN

MIIIN

MIN

MIN

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO SOLVE THESE...

I'M SCREWED ...

OH, YOU STUCK ON SOMETHING, TAKANE?

NEED A LITTLE TUTOR-ING?

N-NO!

SHUT UP!

HUH!?

YOU GOT DONE SO FAST!!

THERE WE GO!

TON (TAP)

トン

TON

トン

カサ

KASA (SHUF)

...

AH!

UH...NOT THAT I'D BE LONELY OR ANYTHING...

スッ

SU (SHP)

N-NO WAY...

YOU'RE GOING HOME ALREADY!?

フヒ

FUI (FWIP)

HARUKA'S PRETTY SMART, AFTER ALL... SMARTER THAN ME ANYWAY.

THE ONLY REASON HE'S IN SUMMER SCHOOL IS TO MAKE UP FOR ALL THE DAYS HE MISSED.

I MEAN, IT'S A FREE COUNTRY.

GOTON (CLUNK)

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

BE-SIDES...

...I CAN HANDLE THESE PROBLEMS BY MYSELF, YOU KNOW.

WELL, GO STUFF YOUR FACE TO YOUR STOMACH'S CONTENT, I GUESS.

GOSO (RUMMAGE)

GOSO

GOSO

HUH?

10

PA (FLASH)

DEADBU

PLAY
ABOUT
CHARACTERSELECT
OPTIONS

WHA...?

KATA (TAPPA)

KATA

THE CHAMPIONSHIP'S COMING UP... PLUS, WATCHING ME PLAY OUGHTA INSPIRE YOU TO FINISH THOSE WORK SHEETS FASTER, HUH?

UGH...

YOU'RE GONNA START PLAYING HERE!? RIGHT NEXT TO ME!!?

SURE AM!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?

WH-WHOA, WHOA, WHOA!!

YOU CAN'T JUST PLAY BY YOURSELF AND BOOST YOUR SKILLS WITHOUT ME...

THAT'S NOT FAIR! I WANNA PLAY TOO!

I ALREADY GOT MY WORK SHEETS DONE, SO...

WELL, THAT'S KINDA YOUR FAULT, ISN'T IT?

I GOTTA GET YOU TO FINISH THAT WORK FIRST!

AGH! WAIT, YOU CAN'T!

GATA (RATTLE)

I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE! I WANNA PLAY TOO!

GATA

BUT...
BUT...

.....

NIKO
CGRIN

I'LL PLAY WITH YOU ONCE YOU'RE DONE...

...SO GET CRACKING, OKAY?

THE NEXT TOURNA-MENT IS SOON.

I WAS PLANNING TO HOLE UP IN MY ROOM ALL SUMMER TO PRACTICE FOR IT TOO...

CHIRA
(GLANCE)

THOUGH I'M SURE HARUKA HATES WASTING SUMMER IN HERE TOO...

NIKO

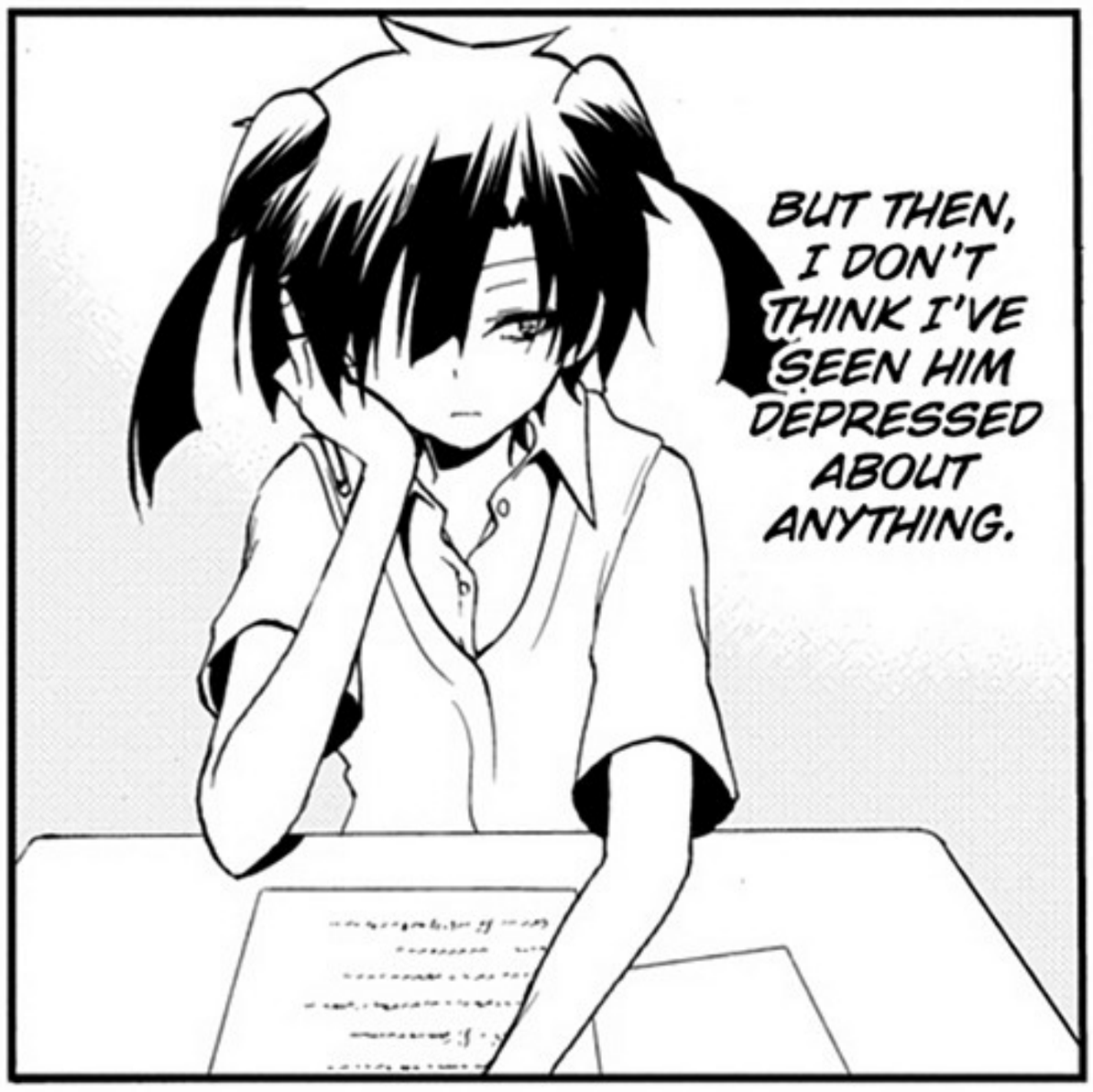
NIKO

BUT WHAT'S HE REALLY THINK ABOUT IT INSIDE?

"IT'S ACTUALLY A LOT OF FUN," HE'D SAY, "AS LONG AS YOU'RE IN CLASS WITH ME."

AND YET, HARUKA NEVER COMPLAINS ABOUT ANYTHING.

...I COULDN'T EVEN VENTURE A GUESS.



HE'S NOT DEPRESSED ABOUT IT, AT LEAST...
SHOULD I BUY IT OR NOT? IT'S SOME KINDA PRE-TOURNEY BONUS!
OOH, HEY, THERE'S A NEW WEAPON AVAIL-ABLE!

EVEN WHEN OUR LACK OF TEAM MEMBERS BENCHED US DURING THE SPORTS MEET HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO...

EVEN WHEN I WAS THE ONLY CLASSMATE HE HAD LEFT...

HE WAS ALWAYS SMILING.

EVEN WHEN HE WAS FORCED OUT OF CLASS AND INTO THE HOSPITAL...

AND ALL THAT TIME...

CHIRA (GLANCE)

ちらっ

HAAAH...

...WATCHING HIM SMILE WOULD ALWAYS ENRAGE ME, EXASPERATE ME...

...AND GRADUALLY ENRAPTURE ME.

.....

BAN (BLAM)

BA

BA

BA

BA

BA

ZUGAGAGAGA (BABABOOM)

WHAT'S UP?

GIVE ME ONE SEC, OKAY? I'VE GOT A MATCH STARTING!

IT'S LIKE WATCHING A CHILD SOME-TIMES...!

BA

BA

BA

BA

BA

BA

BA

BA

.....

HEY, HARUKA...?

HMM?

AH!

I KNOW...

HOW IS THIS GONNA MAKE ME FINISH UP QUICKER?

I CAN'T CONCEN-TRATE WITH ALL THAT GUNFIRE!

DOGAGAGA (KABOOM)

IF HE'S GONNA STAY LATE, HE COULD AT LEAST TRY TO PAY A LITTLE MORE ATTENTION TO ME.

IRA (IRK)

IRA

GA (BANG)

GA

BAN

GA

GA

GA

BAN

I'M SURE HE'LL BE THE SAME TOO.

...IS DOOMED TO REMAIN ALONE AND UNNOTICED.

WHEN YOU SLIP INTO YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD LIKE THIS, ANYONE ATTEMPTING TO ENGAGE WITH YOU...

I'LL JUST FIND SOME RADIO STATION...

HEH HEH.

...MAYBE THAT'LL THROW HIM ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM STOP PLAYING.

IF I PUT THESE ON AND TRY TO ACT LIKE I DON'T CARE ABOUT HIM...

...MAYBE.

HARUKA HAS TO NOTICE THIS AND SPEAK UP SOONER OR LATER.

SU (CLOSE)

HEE HEE!

THEN...

...I CAN FIRE BACK WITH SOMETHING LIKE "BOTHER ME LATER! I'M BUSY LISTENING TO THIS!"

GORON (SPRAWL)

...GEEZ, STILL?

TWENTY MINUTES LATER

.....

.....

YAWN...

THIS IS GETTING SOOOO BORING!

MAYBE I SHOULD JUST GO HOME ALREADY!

IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S INNOCENT EITHER!

STILL IGNORING ME LIKE THIS... THAT'S JUST BEING MEAN!

DAMMIT...

WHY AM I PUTTING MYSELF THROUGH ALL OF THIS FOR HIS SAKE?

GATA (CLATTER)

HEY! HELLOOO!?

HA—

.....

THAT BIG DUMMY.

THAT, OR...

...AM I REALLY THAT UNATTRACTIVE TO HIM...?

HARUKA
...?

AW, COME ON...

STOP SCREWING AROUND WITH ME.

WHAT'S UP WITH YOU TODAY ANYWAY...?

UH...?

GURA (SLUMP)

BA (LUNGE)

GATA (CLATTER)

HA...

HARUKA !!?

NO WAY...

HEY, HARUKA...

IS THIS... ANOTHER ATTACK...!?

KATA

KATA

KATA

KATA (SHIVER)

UH...

HEY!

COME ON, HARU-KA!!

HA-RUKA, GET UP!!!

HARU-KA!?

IS ANYBODY OUT THERE!?

HEY! HELLO !?

HEY!

SHIN (SILENCE)

HE FEELS SO COLD...

AH!

WHAT DO I DO...

WHAT DO I DO...?

GYU (SQUEEZE)

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

I WAS BEING SO STUBBORN OVER A BUNCH OF STUPID CRAP,
AND HERE HE WAS, SUFFERING...

PORO (DRIP)

HARUKA...

BORO

BORO (STREAM)

BORO

HARU-
KAAA...

SOME-
BODY,
HELP...

PLEASE...

SOMEBODY...

KAGEROU DAZE